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ABSTRACT

This document describes a program developed by Maryland's Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Committee in response to state legislation, and is intended to: (1) assist in increasing the awareness among school personnel and community leaders of the incidence of teenage suicide; (2) train school personnel in individual and schoolwide strategies for adolescent suicide awareness/prevention; (3) develop and implement school-based preventive programs and pilot programs; and (4) facilitate cooperative efforts to use community resources in the development and implementation of teenage suicide prevention programs. Included are a description of the design of the Youth Suicide Prevention Program, definitions of terms, a description of the Local Education Agency (LEA) Advisory Board, and a continuum of the program. The three program components of prevention, intervention, and postvention are presented in grid form showing the phases of implementation and their related goals, objectives, and strategies. Resources for the suicide prevention program are listed under the headings of model training programs for LEAs, model programs for K-12 life skills curriculum, model programs for student self-help programs, community referrals, audiovisual materials, speakers' bureau, recommended texts and references, and resource packet. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Committee are included. (NB)

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YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM

for the Public Schools of Maryland

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

1987

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YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGAM

The rate of youth suicide has increased more than threefold in the last two decades, with more than 5,000 suicides among youth nationwide in the last year, including over 100 in Maryland. Youth suicide is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. The prevention of this devastating phenomenon requires a concerted effort by the entire community: educators, social services, health care providers, the media, community leaders, parents, and youth.

Committee Rationale

In response to House Bill 1221 (Youth Suicide Prevention School Programs), which was passed in the 1986 legislative session, the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Committee was established by the Maryland State Department of Education in cooperation with the local education agencies and other appropriate state and community agencies.

In following the intent of House Bill 1221, the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Committee developed a framework for a program to address the following goals:

- Assist in increasing the awareness among school personnel and community leaders of the incidence of teen suicide;
- Train school personnel in individual and schoolwide strategies for teen suicide awareness/prevention;
- Develop and implement school-based preventive programs and pilot programs; and,
- Facilitate cooperative efforts to utilize community resources in the development and implementation of teen suicide prevention programs.

Design of the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program

The framework designed by this committee reflects the three components of a youth suicide prevention school program: prevention, intervention, and "postvention" (i.e., term used by health professionals indicating actions to be taken after suicide or suicide attempt). These components are presented in grid form (see pages 5-17) showing the phases of implementation and their related goals, objectives, and strategies. These phases are designed to be implemented sequentially, with regular formative evaluation and staff development. LEAs may use this framework to help evaluate the comprehensiveness of existing youth suicide prevention programs or as a guide in establishing a youth suicide prevention school program.

The framework developed by the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Committee includes:

- Definition of terms;
- Description of the LEA Advisory Board;

- Phases of implementation of the program's components;
- Goals, objectives, and strategies relative to prevention, intervention, and postvention; and,
- List of resources.

Youth Suicide Prevention School Program: Definitions

The following are the definitions to be used throughout the development and implementation of the Maryland Youth Suicide Prevention School Program:

Prevention: Those coordinated services and activities that help the students, school, families, and community to

- develop an awareness of and a plan of action for coping with the issues surrounding youth suicide, and
- identify those students who are "at-risk" for suicide

Intervention: Those coordinated services and activities that are directed toward all students, but especially those students who are identified as "at-risk" for suicide, to interfere with the chain of events that may lead to suicide.

Postvention: Those coordinated services and activities that serve the students, school, family, and community in coping with the aftermath of a student's attempted suicide, or completed suicide.

Local Education Agency Advisory Board(s):

Each LEA should establish an Advisory Board to monitor and evaluate the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program. Suggested members for this board are supervisors of pupil services and/or guidance counselors from elementary, middle, and high schools; school health nurses; assistant superintendents; school psychologists; curriculum specialists; school administrators; teachers; parents; representatives from community mental health centers, youth services bureaus; law enforcement agencies, the clergy, the state senate and/or house; pediatricians; private practice therapists; a lawyer with juvenile law background; and students.

This advisory board will report to the local superintendent and/or the board of education.

Responsibilities of the board are to:

1. Establish, monitor, and evaluate youth suicide prevention school programs;
2. facilitate the establishment of LEA youth suicide prevention school policies and procedures;

3. Recommend to the superintendent that an LEA-wide committee be established to:

   a. Develop and implement the youth suicide prevention school program: prevention, intervention, and postvention

   b. Provide county-wide inservice training;

4. Audit results and make recommendations for the program;

5. Send total program to MSDE for evaluation;

6. Assure that data is collected and utilized;

7. Act as resource for school-based personnel; and,

8. If possible, have a representative from the Advisory Board serve on school-based crisis intervention team.

CONTINUUM OF THE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM

Components	Component Goal 1	Component Goal 2	Component Goal 3	Component Goal 4	Component Goal 5	Component Goal 6
Prevention	* To educate local school personnel in youth suicide prevention concepts	* To educate parents, students, and community on Youth Suicide Prevention School Program	*** To develop an awareness of the issues surrounding youth suicide for students and to develop and implement student self help programs	***And*** To establish procedures for collecting, recording, reporting, interpreting, and evaluating data related to suicide attempts and completions	*** To develop and/or revise K-12 life skills curriculum	** To assure the quality of the School's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed
Intervention	** To establish and train a crisis intervention team in each school and LEA	**** To refer identified students to the appropriate school and community resources for comprehensive services	** To assure the quality of the School's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed	*** To create an information management center		
Postvention	*** To establish and implement a school-based plan that addresses the aftermath of a suicidal event	** To assure the quality of the school's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed				

* Meets Program Goal 1
** Meets Program Goal 2
*** Meets Program Goal 3
**** Meets Program Goal 4
(See page 1)

PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 1. To educate local school personnel in youth suicide prevention concepts	1. To provide all school personnel with the policies and procedures of the LEA's Youth Suicide Program 2. To provide initial training in, and to maintain awareness of, issues relative to youth suicide 3. To identify for the responsible persons in the local schools the designated community helping resources for the "at-risk" and suicidal student 4. To establish responsibilities and roles of school personnel in follow-up referrals to community agencies	1. Use a consultant with expertise in youth suicide prevention to plan, develop and implement the the program 2a. Provide training in statistics, trends, warning signs, and inhouse referral processes b. Provide orientation to the program for all new staff members 3a. Establish responsibilities of school staff regarding students "at-risk" for suicide b. Provide opportunities for crisis team members to meet individually with school staff to discuss specific concerns 4. Contact the advisory board to obtain community resources

PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 2. To educate parents, and community on the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program	1. To provide parents, and community with a body of knowledge which enables them to be involved in prevention of youth suicide	1a. Provide information and resources to parents and community groups including films, brochures, and speakers b. Develop a strategy for involving the media c. Investigate feasibility of parenting programs d. Provide annual parent/community programs

PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 3. To develop an awareness of the issues surrounding youth suicide for students and to develop and implement student self-help programs	1. To provide students with a body of knowledge which enables them to be involved in the prevention of youth suicide 2. To provide students with alternative support networks	1a. Provide information and resources to students, including films, brochures, and speakers b. Provide annual student programs on suicide prevention 2a. Obtain information on student support programs and evaluate them for local use b. Use where appropriate peer helper programs and peer support groups, such as adopt-a-friend, welcome wagon for new students, big brother and sister programs, and Students Helping Other People Programs (SHOP) c. Develop an implementation plan using state and local resources

PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 4. To establish procedures for collecting, recording, reporting, interpreting, and evaluating data related to suicide attempts and completions	1. To provide comprehensive data for use in the evaluation of the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program	1a. Establish guidelines for types of data to be collected, e.g., attempted suicides, identified high risk students, completed suicides, and referrals to community agencies b. Establish centralized data collection center c. Determine how statistics should be used: program evaluation, annual report, inservice education

PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 5. To develop and/or revise K-12 life skills curriculum (proposed Health Education Curriculum)	1. To involve administrators, teachers, students, nurses, pupil personnel workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and curriculum specialists in the development of curriculum 2. To provide summary and evaluation of youth suicide prevention curriculum to Division of Instruction, MSDE	1. Include in curriculum stress management, decision-making, handling peer pressure, assertiveness, recognizing and coping with depression, available school and community resources and coping with death and dying

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PREVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 6. To assure the quality of the school's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed	1. To provide inservice courses to train personnel in suicide prevention	1a. Use identified community resources to train school personnel b. Use school-based crisis intervention teams to assess the needs of the school and to provide inservice training c. Assess the needs of the school and to to provide inservice training using school-based crisis intervention teams d. Use the LEA-wide crisis intervention team as a resource

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INTERVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 1. To establish and train a crisis intervention team in each school and LEA.	1. To provide each school with a team of trained personnel that will identify and evaluate "at-risk" students, and provide crisis intervention 2. To make students aware of the purpose and accessibility of the crisis intervention team, and the resources available within the school	1a. Develop crisis intervention teams comprised of counselors, nurses, pupil personnel workers, psychologists, teachers, students, and mental health professionals. Include member of advisory board on LEA crisis intervention team b. Provide inservice training for crisis intervention teams annually and as needed 2a. Identify to LEA and school based crisis intervention teams the LEA's policies that apply directly to suicide intervention b. Develop a written assessment tool to be used with each student identified as "at-risk" c. Use the previously designated community helping resources for the "at-risk" and suicidal student

INTERVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 2. To refer identified students to the appropriate school and community resources for comprehensive services	1. To use the school's crisis intervention team to determine the appropriate plan for identified students 2. To use the established referral system and coordinate with local agency personnel who are prepared to address the "at-risk" student 3. To use the Pupil Services Team, if appropriate, in the development and re-assessment of each identified student's plan	1a. Maintain confidentiality of students at all times b. Utilize a written assessment tool in order to identify the level of risk of the identified student 2. Include students, parents, and community when determining the appropriate school and/or community based referral plan 3a. Identify members of the school's crisis intervention team to act as services coordinators for that "at-risk" student b. Consider alternative school placement if environmental change is appropriate

INTERVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 3. To assure the quality of the school's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed	1. To provide courses that train new personnel on the crisis intervention team and update established crisis intervention team members	1a. Use identified community resources to train school personnel b. Use LEA procedures for staff development, e.g., release time, designated days, and program visitation c. Assess the needs of the school and provide inservice training using school-based crisis intervention teams d. Use the LEA-wide crisis intervention team as a resource

INTERVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 4. To create an information management center	1. To establish a reporting system within each LEA for each school to collect data on attempted suicides, completed suicides, and contacts with students "at risk" for suicide	1a. Maintain confidentiality of the student at all times. b. Report statistics collected by school's designated person to one person on the county level. Use statistics for assessing needs on the local and county level and for evaluating each "at-risk" student

POSTVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 1. To establish and implement a school-based plan that addresses the aftermath of suicidal event	1. To assist the school's population in returning to its previous level of functioning 2. To facilitate the return to school of the attemptor by establishing a low stress supportive environment	1. Use the guidelines of the school's prevention component where appropriate b. Provide information and support to local school staff using the school's crisis intervention team and the previously identified community resources such as media, clergy, and mental health professionals 2a. Establish a support network using students, counselors, nurses, pupil personnel workers, teachers, and psychologists, for returning attemptors b. Provide continued monitoring of the returning attemptor through the school's intervention team 3a. Provide appropriate assembly program b. Provide group counseling sessions for friends and other interested peers of attemptors or completors c. Provide school and community support system for families of the attemptors and completors

POSTVENTION

COMPONENT GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Goal 2. To assure the quality of the school's program through the training and updating of the school's team annually and as needed	1. To provide inservice courses training new personnel on the crisis intervention team and updating the school and community on the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program	1a. Use identified community resources to train school personnel b. Use LEA procedures for staff development, e.g., release time, designated days, and program visitation c. School-based crisis intervention teams should assess the needs of the school and provide inservice training d. Use the LEA-wide crisis intervention team as a resource

RESOURCES FOR
YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM

Model Training Programs for LEAs

- Fairfax County, Virginia
  The Adolescent Suicide Prevention Program
  Fairfax County Public Schools
  Department of Student Services and
  Special Education
  Fairfax, Virginia 22030

- Cherry Creek Schools
  Department of Mental Health Services
  3301 South Monaco
  Denver, Colorado 80222

- San Mateo Suicide Prevention and
  Crisis Center
  1811 Trousdale Drive
  Burlingham, California 94010

- Worcester County, Maryland
  Lifelines: Helping Students Find Positive
  Alternatives
  A School Crisis Management Program
  Worcester County Public Schools
  P.O. Box 130
  Snow Hill, Maryland 21863 (301) 632-2582

- Carroll County Health Department
  Bureau of Mental Health and Alcoholism
  540 Washington Road
  P. O. Box 845
  Westminster, Maryland 21157
  Contact: Howard M. Held, M.S.W., Director
  (301) 857-5001, Ext. 400

- Montgomery County Public Schools
  850 Hungerford Drive
  Rockville, Maryland 20850
  Contact: G. C. Edward Masaad
  Chair of Advisory Task Force on
  Adolescent Depression and Suicide
  (301) 279-3508

- Prince George's County Public Schools
  14201 School Lane
  Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
  Contact: Mrs. Anne Pinkney Prince
  Associate Superintendent of the
  Division of Pupil Services
  (301) 952-3900

Model Programs for K-12 Life Skills Curriculum

- Fairfax County, Virginia
  The Adolescent Suicide Prevention Program
  Fairfax County Public Schools
  Department of Student Services and
  Special Education
  Fairfax, Virginia 22030

- Worcester County, Maryland
  Lifelines: Helping Students Find Positive
  Alternatives
  A School Crisis Management Program
  Worcester County Public Schools
  P.O. Box 130
  Snow Hill, Maryland 21863 (301) 632-2582

- San Mateo Suicide Prevention and
  Crisis Center
  1811 Trousdale Drive
  Burlingham, California 94010

Model Programs for Student Self-Help Programs

A broad spectrum of programs that range from student/peer counseling, adopt-a-friend, and support groups are detailed.

- Baltimore County Public Schools
  6901 North Charles Street
  Greenwood, Towson, Maryland 21204
  (Perry Hall High School Program)
  Contact: Bruce Seward

- Fairfax County, Virginia
  The Adolescent Suicide Prevention Program
  Fairfax County Public Schools
  Department of Student Services and
  Special Education
  Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Community Referrals

"Helplines Handbook" published by Maryland Chapter-National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention

Maryland Chapter
National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention
P.O. Box 373
Baltimore, Maryland 21022
Co-Ordinator: Jay N. Mossman

Audiovisual Materials

1. Video cassettes -available through Maryland Chapter-National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention

   - "You're Only Human" - record and music by Billy Joel (appropriate for students grade 4-12)

   - "Talking About Teenage Suicide with Susan White Bowden" (appropriate for students grades 4-12)

2. "Sometimes I Wonder If It's Worth It" - a 30 minute program on preventing teenage suicide for high school students and adults.

   Available for preview and purchase:

   Agency for Instructional Technology
   1111 West 17th Street
   Bloomington, Indiana 47402

3. Sound Film Strips - available through:

   Sunburst Communications
   39 Washington Avenue
   Pleasantville, New York 10570

   - "Why Did Jenny Have to Die? Preventing Teen Suicide"

   - "Teens Who Choose Life: The Suicidal Crisis" (Both appropriate for grades 5-12)

4. Other Audiovisual Resources

   - Adolescent Suicide
     American Personnel and Guidance Association
     2 Skyline Place, Suite 400
     Falls Church, Virginia 22041
     703-820-4700
     16mm - 39 minutes

   - Do I Really Want To Die
     Polymorph Films
     118 South Street
     Boston, Massachusetts 02111
     617-542-2004

- Inside, I Ache
(teenage film)
Mass Media Ministries
2116 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
301-727-3270
Videocassette (16mm)

- Teenage Suicide
(narrated by Timothy Hutton)
Films, Inc.
733 Green Bay Road
Wilmette, Illinois 60091
312-256-3200
16mm/vc - 60 minutes
Rental Department: 312-674-6274

Speakers' Bureau

Maryland - National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention

P.O. Box 373
Baltimore, Maryland 21022
(301) 321-4539

will provide a list of trained speakers for general and/or specific topics of youth suicide prevention.

Recommended texts and references

1. Youth Suicide: Too Young to Die, F. Klagsburn
New York: 1977 Pocket Books

2. A Cry for Help, M. Griffin and C. Felsenthal
New York: 1983 Doubleday

3. Youth Suicide, Peck, Farberow & Litman (Eds)
New York: 1985 Springer Publishing Company

4. Youth Suicide: Depression & Loneliness, Hafen and Frandensen, Behavioral Health Associates: Provo, Utah 1986 (Paper)

5. The Suicidal Child, Pfeffer, The Guilford Press:
New York: 1986 (suicide in children up to age 12)

6. Maryland Child Abuse and Neglect Law: Family Law, Section 5-701 through 5-710. Delineates the responsibilities of school personnel in reporting confidential disclosures by students.

Resource Packet

Contains statistics, warning signs, trends, "do's and don'ts" for students, parents, and school staff.

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   8303 Liberty Road
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Baltimore, Maryland 21201 225-1290

21. Joan Stine, Assistant Director
Preventive Medicine Administration
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
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300 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201 225-1362

22. Genie Wessel
DHMH/Division Infant, Child, and Adolescent Health
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